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## THE PRACTICAL OUTCOME OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS. (HEB. 10:19-25.)

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THE longest doctrinal discussion of the epistle (7:1—10:18) has just been finished. The practical conclusions from the principles already laid down fill the epistle from this point to the close. The author has presented Jesus as the great High-Priest, abiding continually (7:1-3), greater than Abraham and Levi (7:4-10), superseding the former priesthood (7:11-25), himself perfected (7:26-28), representing a more excellent ministry (8:1-6), with a better covenant (8:7-13), admitting to the holy of holies (9:1-10), by the sprinkling of blood (9:11-22), through the offering of himself (9:23-28), as the one sufficient sacrifice (10:1-18). Our paragraph, immediately following, contains a threefold exhortation: let us enter in (10:19-22), let us hold fast our confession (10:23), and let us consider each other unto mutual helpfulness (10:24, 25).

In the tabernacle the Shekinah glory rested upon the inner shrine, but the view of it was forbidden to the people. A heavy veil hung before it, and across that veil the whole law had written two words: "Enter not!" The people stood in the outer court, separated by all the width of the holy place and by the veil before the holy of holies from the enjoyment of the immediate presence of God. On the great Day of Atonement the high-priest alone, duly prepared, parted the veil, stepped over the threshold, and stood before God. For a few moments only he tarried there, and then, retiring, the veil fell again and hung undisturbed for a year. That was the old dispensation. Its whole ritual service was intended to impress the thought that no man could stand before God and live.

The whole contention of this epistle has been that the new dispensation has brought in a better order of things. The veil has been rent. The presence of God is no longer concealed from sight and

barred off from approach. Through the veil a way has been opened, and now all of God's people may enter in and be blessed with the continuous fellowship and the abiding presence of God. What has brought about this almost absolute difference between the two dispensations? The life of the man Jesus. He was our Brother (2:11-18), and he is our Forerunner (6:20). In true humanity he achieved a holy character, and he has entered into eternal fellowship with God. He has left the way into the holiest open to us. Where our Brother and our Leader (2:10) has gone we too may enter in.

Therefore, brothers, since the work of atonement and redemption has been accomplished in the life and death of Jesus, who is our High-Priest forevermore (7:1-10:18), we have boldness (*παρρησίαν*), such boldness as was characteristic of Apollos (Acts 18:26), as well as of Paul (Acts 28:31) and Peter (Acts 2:29) and John (Acts 4:13); a boldness to say all that is upon one's heart; a holy frankness and freedom of speech; the boldness with which all believers may approach the throne of grace (4:16); a boldness (*εἰς τὴν εἴσοδον*) for the means of entering the holy of holies in the blood of Jesus, through the power of the liberated life of our Lord. Twenty-one times in the thirteen chapters of this epistle reference is made to the blood. Thirteen times the reference is to the blood of slain beasts. Twice the blood of men is mentioned (2:14 and 12:4). Six times a statement is made concerning the blood of Jesus (9:12, 14; 10:19, 29; 12:24; 13:20). A study of these six passages will show that it is not the blood shed on Calvary that is in view, but the blood sprinkled in the holy of holies in the heavenly sanctuary.

It follows, therefore, that the phrase is a figure of speech. The blood was merely a symbol of the life. It was so in the Old Testament sacrifices. "The life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh atonement by reason of the life" (Lev. 17:11). The life was the essential thing. The blood was a symbol of the life, set free in sacrifice and made available for atoning work. With Jesus, in the one sufficient sacrifice as in all preceding sacrifices, the life was the essential thing. When his blood was shed on Calvary, his life was set free for use in atoning work. The shed

blood became the sprinkled blood before the result of the atonement was made available to the race. The liberated life of our Lord was presented in the presence of God and made available through the Holy Spirit as a supernatural power to enable men to incorporate and incarnate the life of their Lord. Purifying themselves even as he is pure, they find the means of entrance to the holiest open to them, which he inaugurated for us. He was the first to live the absolutely holy life and to prove its possibility for all men. His liberated and heavenly life is imparted to all who believe, and they come to God as he did, by this new and living way through the veil, that is, his flesh.

He achieved his holy character in real humanity, during his life in the flesh. The flesh had become the seat of sin and, like the veil in the tabernacle, had shut man out from the enjoyment of the presence of God. Through this veil of the flesh, in genuine incarnation, Jesus entered into and maintained perfect fellowship with us in all the limitations of our humanity. Through this veil of the flesh, in genuine incarnation, Jesus entered into and maintained unbroken fellowship with the Father, uninterrupted communion with God. In the flesh he condemned sin in the flesh. In him the flesh became no longer a hindrance, but rather a help, to holiness, as furnishing the means of its attainment. It is no longer a barrier or ban, but a new and living way. Through perfect obedience in the flesh we may enter into perfect blessedness with our Lord. In his humanity through the veil of his flesh, Jesus opened the way. In our humanity through the veil of our flesh, we follow Jesus into the holy of holies. We follow without fear, because he is our Leader. We enter with boldness, because he is our Brother. We know that we "ought also to walk, even as he walked" (1 John 2:6). Our author has brought us to this conviction, and the conclusion is based upon the fact that Jesus is our Brother and a great Priest over the house of God. He has all the sympathy and all the power we need, and therefore we are ready to receive the exhortation which follows.

Having boldness and having a High-Priest who will answer for us, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having the heart sprinkled from an evil conscience, and having the body washed with pure water. All priests at the time of their installation

in office were first washed and then sprinkled with blood. Now, all believers are priests, and like priests are washed and sprinkled. Our washing, however, is not with material water; it is the washing of the pure water of regeneration through which our body has become a fit temple for the Holy Spirit. Our sprinkling is not with material blood; but our hearts have been cleansed from an evil conscience by the inflow of the new life, the liberated life of our Lord. The old unsatisfactory symbols have been replaced by blessed realities in Christ.

The second and third exhortations follow. Let us hold fast the confession of the hope unwavering, for faithful is the one who has promised; and let us consider each other unto a provocation of love and of good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves, according as it has become a custom to some to do, but exhorting each other, and by so much the more as ye see the day approaching.

We note the trilogy of Christian graces in three successive verses of the three exhortations of this paragraph: Let us draw near in full assurance of faith (10:22); let us hold fast the confession of hope (10:23); let us consider each other unto a provocation of love and good works (10:24). These three might stand as titles for the three remaining chapters of the epistle: the full assurance of faith, chap. 11; the holding fast to our hope (chap. 12); provocation to love and good works (chap. 13).

We notice, too, the practical end of all our author's argument and teaching. This paragraph (10:19-25) is a single sentence in the Greek. It begins with the profoundest mysteries of the writer's faith, the efficacy of the sprinkled blood, the privilege of the permanent Presence, the entering into the holy of holies while in the flesh; and it ends with exhortations to love and good works, to synagoguing and paracleting, to mutual helpfulness in public assembling and private comforting. Its mysticism eventuates in realism of the plainest type. Its counsels of perfection are to be put into practice in the ordinary duties of life.

What could be more practical than the two subordinate exhortations with which the paragraph ends? First: Go to church! Do not forsake the assembling of yourselves together! Do not become come-outers as some do! Do not be schismatics or separatists!

If any man becomes so good that he does not feel the need of association with his brethren in their worship and work, his goodness is not of the New Testament type. If any man stays at home when the people of God assemble for prayer or testimony or preaching service, simply because he is so much holier than they, and he knows that none of them can help him, and he does not care to inconvenience himself to help them, he is a hypocritical Pharisee and not a Christian. He knows nothing of the genuine spirit of Christ.

With his negative exhortation the author couples a positive one. Be paracletes! Let all be *παρακαλοῦντες*, paracleting like their Lord! Barnabas was a son of paracletism (*υἱὸς παρακλήσεως*, Acts 4:36). Jesus is our Paraclete (*παράκλητον*, 1 John 2:1). The Holy Spirit is another Paraclete (*ἄλλον παράκλητον*, John 14:16). All believers, like Barnabas, are to be under-paracletes, doing in their measure the work of the supreme paracletes. Do they plead the cause of the brethren before God (1 John 2:1; Rom. 8:26)? So ought we. Do they comfort, teach, guide into truth (Acts 7:55, 56; 10:13-16; 16:6, 7, 10; John 14:15, 26; 16:13)? So ought we. Do they strive with men, reprove, and convince of sin (Acts 9:4-6; John 16:8-11)? So ought we. We are to be at the same work with our Lord.

Six blessings have been set before us in this paragraph. (1) Jesus, our Brother and Leader; the Blessor is the one greatest blessing in whom all other blessings are included; (2) boldness to tell everything to Jesus; (3) entrance into the Holiest with him; (4) a new life in the flesh; (5) a clean heart; (6) full assurance of faith. Six duties are laid upon those who enjoy these great gifts: (1) they must draw nigh to God; (2) they must hold fast their confession; (3) they must consider each other; (4) they must lead such lives as will provoke to love and good works; (5) they must be in their place in the assemblies of the saints; (6) they must be under-paracletes, exhorting and comforting and helping according as the brethren may need.

Under the list of blessings the readers of the epistle will be ready to write: "All these do we steadfastly believe." Under the list of duties they will then be ready to write: "All these will we faithfully perform." They will do that the more readily because they see the day approaching in which the Lord himself will ask them concerning these things.